BRITISH COLUMBIA
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BCStats

Infoline

Contact: bcstats.infoline@gov.bc.ca Issue: 09-43 October 30, 2009

- **Lumber production in BC down 14.2% in August**
- **Revenues at food service and drinking places up 1.6% in August**
- **Gang-related homicides in BC up 41.7% in 2008**

The Economy

- **Lumber production at British Columbia's sawmills continued to fall in August, slipping 14.2% from the same month last year.** Accounting for nearly nine-tenths of all lumber output in the province, Interior mills cut back substantially (-13.8%) on production and were the main contributor to the overall decline. *Data Source: SC Cat no. 35-003-X*

- **Sales at British Columbia's food services and drinking places rose 1.6% (*seasonally adjusted*) to $665.9 million between July and August.** Nationally, revenues in the industry were up 0.2% to just over $4.0 billion with the largest increases registered in BC (+1.6%), Manitoba (+1.3%) and New Brunswick (+1.0%). *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **The number of people receiving regular Employment Insurance (EI) benefits in British Columbia fell 2.1% (*seasonally adjusted*) in August.** However, compared to August 2008, the number of recipients had more than doubled (+107.8%), the second largest year-over-year increase in the country behind Alberta (+227.7%). *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

Crime

- **Police reported 117 homicides in BC during 2008, resulting in a 30.9% increase in the homicide rate to 2.67 per 100,000 population.** In British Columbia, gang-related homicides, including the deaths of organized crime and street gang members as well as innocent bystanders, were up 41.7% to 34 in 2008. Nearly three out of every ten homicides committed in BC were gang-related, the second highest proportion in the country. Only Alberta reported a higher share of homicides attributable to gang activity (32%). Overall, each of the western provinces and territories posted homicide rates that were higher than the national rate in 2008. *Data Source: SC Cat no. 85-002-X*

- **Victims of homicide in Canada were most likely to be either stabbed (33%) or shot (33%), with handguns being the most commonly used firearm (61%).** Nationally, the rate of firearm-related homicides has increased 23.8% between 2002 and 2008.

  Canada-wide, more than four-fifths of solved homicides were committed by someone known to the victim in 2008. Most often the killer was either an acquaintance (41%) or a relative (33%).

  Women accounted for roughly 24% of homicide victims, the lowest this proportion has been since data collection began in 1974.

  Data Source: SC Cat no. 85-002-X

- **British Columbia's rates[1] for police-reported serious assaults have risen between 1998 and 2008.** These crimes include assaults with a weapon or causing bodily harm (207.8; +26.6%), aggravated assaults (9.9; +59.4%) and assaults against peace officers (25.2; +17.6%). While the rate of assaults with a weapon or causing bodily harm was higher than the national average (162.9), rates for aggravated assault and assault against peace officers were below national levels (10.7 and 29.1 respectively).

  Among BC's largest metropolitan areas, rates for police-reported assaults with a weapon or

[1] All rates are per 100,000 population.

Report **Energy Exports are Powering Down...for Now**

Did you know...

In BC, there are an estimated 470,878 children aged 5 to 14 years.

That's a lot of potential trick-or-treaters!

Data Source: Statistics Canada and BC Stats

causing bodily harm were highest in Vancouver (207.4), Kelowna (207.1) and Abbotsford-Mission (205.6), all of which posted rates close to, though slightly less than, the provincial average. Rates for aggravated assault were highest in Abbotsford-Mission (13.0) and Vancouver (9.2) while the rate of assault against peace officers was highest in Kelowna (29.2) and Victoria (28.2).

Data Source: SC Cat no. 85-002-X

Education

- **In 2006, four in ten First Nations women had completed some form of post-secondary education.** Of those that had graduated from a post-secondary program, 21% had obtained a college diploma, 9% a university degree, 9% a trades certificate and 5% a certificate or diploma from a university. While the proportion of First Nations women obtaining trades certificates (-2 percentage-points) was down between 2001 and 2006, attainment of college diplomas (+4 percentage-points) and university degrees (+2 percentage-points) had increased.

  However, while the share of First Nations women graduating with post-secondary education has increased, the gap between First Nations women and women in the total Canadian population has widened at the university degree level. In 2001, there was a 12 percentage-point difference (7% First Nations women versus 19% of all Canadian women) in university degree attainment. By 2006, that attainment gap widened to 14 percentage-points. *Data Source: SC Cat no. 81-004-X*

- **Four out of five 17-year-olds in Canada who aspired to a job requiring a university degree[2] knew that a degree was needed.** Intended occupation appeared to be a significant determinant to correctly identifying the required level of education. Nearly all of those who aspired to careers as judges & lawyers (98%), physicians, dentists & veterinarians (97%) and teachers (96%) were aware that a university degree was necessary. However, barely more than half of those seeking a career in mathematics & computer programming (55%) or the performing arts (54%) realized that a university degree was essential to reach their intended career goal.

  It is interesting to note that of those 17-year-olds that aspired to a position that actually required no more than a high school diploma, almost one-quarter believed that a university degree was vital to meeting that goal. *Data Source: SC Cat no. 11F0019M*

The Nation

- **Canada's real gross domestic product inched down slightly (-0.1%, *seasonally adjusted*) in August as production slowed in oil & gas extraction (-2.3%).** Also contributing to the decline was a 0.7% drop in activity in manufacturing and a 0.5% dip in wholesale trade. On the up-side, value added in retail trade (+0.3%) and construction (+0.2%) advanced in August. This was the first posted gain in construction since October 2008.

  Data Source: SC Cat no. 15-001-X

- **Weaker petroleum and coal product prices (-32.1%) was the main contributor to a 6.1% year-over-year decline in the Industrial Product Price Index (IPPI) in September.** The IPPI was also pulled down by lower prices for chemical (-9.7%) and primary metal products (-8.1%). This decline in prices completely overshadowed a rise in prices for motor vehicles and other transportation equipment (+2.3%). Closer to home, BC softwood lumber prices dipped 4.7% while BC pulpwood chip prices were off 9.7%. Excluding exchange rate effects, the IPPI would actually have fallen by 6.7% rather than 6.1%.

  Data Source: SC Cat no. 62-011-X

[2] Based on employer interviews conducted by professional job analysts at Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

For data originating from Statistics Canada, data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the catalogue number.

Infoline Report

Contact: Dan Schrier
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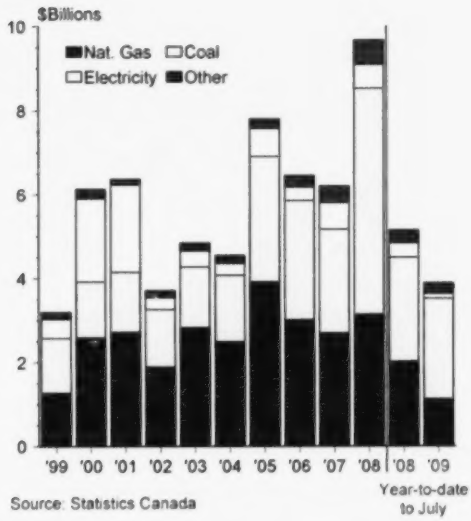
originally published in
Exports Issue 09-07

Energy Exports are Powering Down...for Now

In 2008, despite the sagging fortunes of the province's forest sector, there was growth in the value of total British Columbia commodity exports, largely due to increased shipments of energy products. Most of the growth was in exports of coal, which more than doubled from 2007; however, natural gas and petroleum products also contributed to the overall increase in energy shipments.

The value of lumber shipments has dropped for four consecutive years, such that, at $3.6 billion in 2008, the value was just over half that of the comparable figure in 2004. Meanwhile, exports of coal grew 117.4% between 2007 and 2008 to $5.4 billion, pushing that commodity ahead of softwood lumber as BC's most significant export.

Energy products helped boost BC exports in 2008, but have slipped back in 2009

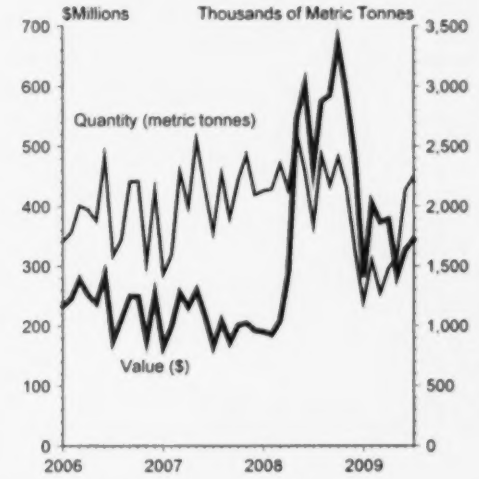


Source: Statistics Canada

Year-to-date in 2009, the energy sector is not faring nearly as well as last year, with the value of energy exports down 24.5% in the first seven months of the year compared to the same period in 2008. Given that forest sector exports have slumped even further, in the absence of offsetting increases in energy shipments overall BC origin exports have slumped 23.2% compared to the January to July period in 2008.

Of the major categories of energy products exported from the province, coal remains the top performer. The outstanding performance in 2008 was the result of a combination of shortage of supply and strong demand. The supply constraints were the consequence of flooding and other problems with mines in Australia and Russia, in particular. As a result, British Columbia coal producers were able to obtain record contract prices for their coal.

High prices drove up the value of BC coal exports in 2008, but a slump in demand brought it back down



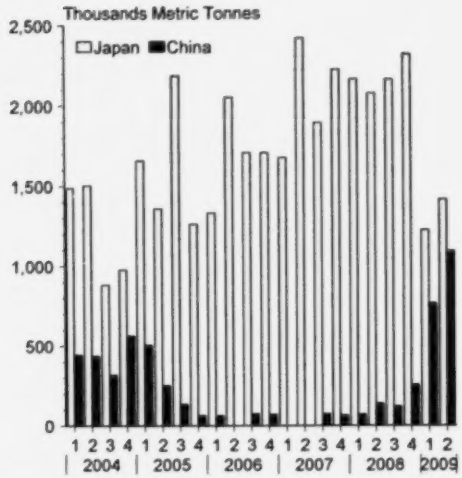
Source: Statistics Canada

The demand for coal has slumped somewhat in the face of the global recession. As a result, the contract prices for coal arrived at in April were around half the value of those from 2008. Nevertheless, the 2009 contract prices are still the

second highest ever and remain substantially higher than those from two years earlier. Over the first half of 2009, the value of coal exports exceeded the level attained in the first six months of 2008, but given the lower prices, it is likely that the remainder of the year will see export values significantly lower than those achieved in the second half of 2008, as is already evident with the addition of data for July.

The destination for coal mined in British Columbia has changed significantly over the first half of 2009. The volume of coal shipped to Japan has experienced a substantial decline, while exports to Mainland China have taken off.

While BC origin exports of coal to Japan have fallen off over the first two quarters of 2009, shipments to China have skyrocketed

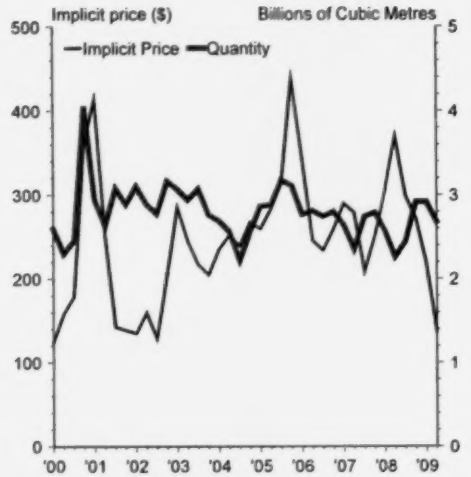


Source: Statistics Canada

China has been stockpiling coal, as well as a number of other commodities, but China's reserves are nearing full capacity and it is likely that the country will start to scale back on its purchases[1]. If this occurs, BC coal producers could see a further drop in the volume of coal shipped. On the other hand, there are signs that the global economy is beginning to recover from the recession, which could boost demand for coal from other countries, such as Japan. The high price of coal has spurred exploration activity in British Columbia, particularly in the northeast, such that the province could be well positioned to respond to any uptick in demand over the next several years.

While coal prices have remained strong, the same cannot be said for the price of natural gas. A number of new discoveries across North America have boosted the supply of natural gas well above the level of demand, which has fallen as a result of the recession. Consequently, prices for natural gas have plunged.

Demand for natural gas has remained fairly stable, but the price has dropped considerably



Source: Statistics Canada

The precipitous drop in the price of natural gas has resulted in a sharp decline in the value of natural gas exports, with shipments dropping 44.1% in the first seven months of 2009 compared to January to July of 2008. This has also had a deleterious effect on government revenues. Revenue projections in the February budget were based on an estimated price for

[1] Doran, D'Arcy, "China-driven commodities rally nearing end," AFP news wire, June 20, 2009.

natural gas of $5.87 per gigajoule; however, prices have since fallen to almost half that figure. The cost to British Columbia's treasury is in the neighbourhood of $275 to $325 million for each dollar of decline in the price of natural gas[2].

While the outlook for the remainder of 2009 appears challenging for the natural gas sector, there is at least one promising development on the horizon. The prospects for the construction of a liquefied natural gas export terminal in Kitimat are looking encouraging. Several major gas producers have signed deals to provide natural gas for export through the proposed terminal, such that there is enough supply committed to meet almost 100% of the terminal's capacity. This makes it likely that the project will go ahead, which is a complete turnaround from a year ago when the facility was being designed to import natural gas. The flood of new discoveries in North America made imports unnecessary and the project looked to be dead; however, given the prospects of oversupply in North America, it now makes economic sense to look at exporting the gas to other markets. While it will be a few years before the terminal will be online, it will provide an opportunity for increased exports of natural gas in the long term.

Similar to natural gas, the price of electricity has also experienced a significant decline in recent months. The biggest single reason for the drop is likely reduced industrial consumption related to the economic downturn. The low price of natural gas is also a factor, because gas can sometimes be substituted for electricity and also because natural gas is sometimes used to generate electricity.

The price for exported electricity has slumped substantially over the last year

Source: Statistics Canada

Due to the combination of reduced prices and less demand, the value of BC electricity exports has dropped by almost two-thirds (-65.9%) year-to-date to July compared to the same seven-month period in 2008. While an immediate turnaround is unlikely, demand for electricity is likely to pick up once the economy gets rolling and industrial consumption increases.

With the exception of 2000 and 2001, when the energy crisis in California sent electricity prices soaring and the value of BC's electricity exports hovered around $2 billion in each of those years, electricity has generally taken a back seat to natural gas and coal as a generator of export revenues. Nevertheless, electricity constitutes a significant export for British Columbia. From 1994 to 2007 the value of electricity exports exceeded that of all energy products in the "other" category, which primarily includes petroleum products. Last year, the value of electricity exports was virtually equal to that of petroleum and miscellaneous other energy products, and year-to-date, exports of other energy products have exceeded those of electricity.

[2] Source: British Columbia Ministry of Finance, Budget and Fiscal Plan 2009/10 – 2011/12, February 17, 2009.

Despite the better performance compared to electricity, other energy exports have still slumped 17.8% year-to-date to July compared to the same period in 2008. Most of the decline is due to a 38.3% drop in the value of shipments of crude petroleum. As a consequence of the recession, demand for crude oil has fallen, which has resulted in a build-up of inventories worldwide and is likely the main reason for the drop in exports from BC.

The outlook for the remainder of the year does not look overly promising for energy exports, but once the global economy starts to pick up and industrial production gathers momentum, demand for energy will also grow. The prospect of a natural gas export facility and increased production of coal and natural gas, in particular, should ensure that energy continues to play a large role in BC's exports for many years to come.

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Infoline

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Issue 09–43

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BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Jul1/2009	% change on one year ago
BC	4,455.2	1.6
Canada	33,739.9	1.2
GDP and INCOME (Revised Apr 27)		% change on
(BC - at market prices)	2008	one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *($ millions)*	199,214	3.5
GDP *($ 2002 millions)*	164,161	-0.3
GDP *($ 2002 per Capita) (reflects revised pop)*	37,466	-1.9
Personal Disposable Income *($ 2002 per Capita)*	26,110	3.3
TRADE ($ millions, seasonally adjusted)		% change on prev. month
Manufacturing Shipments - Aug	2,660	0.0
Merchandise Exports - Aug	1,954	-8.2
Retail Sales - Aug	4,437	0.8
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX	% change on	12-month avg
(all items - Sep 2009)	one year ago	% change
BC	-1.2	0.4
Vancouver	-1.0	0.6
Victoria	-1.0	0.6
Canada	-0.9	0.6
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change on
(seasonally adjusted)	Sep '09	prev. month
Labour Force - BC	2,453	0.2
Employed - BC	2,270	0.6
Unemployed - BC	183	-4.5
		Aug '09
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	7.4	7.8
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	8.4	8.7
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Oct 28/2009	Oct 29/2008
Prime Business Rate	2.25	4.00
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	3.80	6.35
- 5 year	5.84	7.20
US-CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Oct 28/2009	Oct 29/2008
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $ per US $	1.0756	1.2308
(closing rate) US $ per Cdn $	0.9272	0.8163
AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE		% change on
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Sep '09	one year ago
BC	810.38	2.5
Canada	813.44	2.1

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Wage Rate } Statistics Canada

Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bankofcanada.ca

Small Business Profile 2009

The 2009 Edition of the annual profile of small business in British Columbia is now available. The report provides information on British Columbia's small businesses, including number of businesses, employment and small business' contribution to the provincial economy.

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/bus_stat/busind/sm_bus.asp#sbp

Population & Household Projections

The latest British Columbia population projections (PEOPLE 34) are now available. BC Stats produces population and household projections for British Columbia and for a number of sub-provincial geographies in the province, including: Development Regions, Regional Districts, Health Authorities, Health Service Delivery Areas, Local Health Areas, College Regions, School Districts, and six Special Regions.

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/pop/pop/popproj.asp

British Columbia Wellness Atlas 2008

The dynamic and highly configurable atlas allows users greater flexibility to explore the regional variations and correlations of the wellness data. In total, 40 indicators are drawn from the CCHS (Canadian Community Health Survey) and 27 indicators are from the 2006 Census of Canada and 2008 Socio-Demographic variables from BC Stats. The Wellness Atlas presents information in a geographical context (Health Service Delivery Areas), revealing spatial variations and patterns across British Columbia. To display your own unique dataset, contact Pat Bluemel to discuss.

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/pop/georef/geopage.asp

Released this week by BC Stats

- Business Indicators, October 2009
- Current Statistics, October 2009

Next week

- Tourism Sector Monitor, October 2009
- Labour Force Statistics, September 2009
- Earnings & Employment Trends, Sept. 2009

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